PHIL. Inquirer 3-29-77

New assassinations leads claimed

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WASHINGTON — The House Select Committee on Assassinations says it has "new information" and "new witnesses" in the murders of both President John F. Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Therefore, the committee told the full House in a 14-page report issued yesterday, it should get a new lease on life and a new budget of $2.79 million for 1977.

The committee, torn by dissension between former chairman Henry B. Gonzalez (D., Tex.) and chief counsel Richard A. Sprague earlier this year, has recovered lost prestige this month under its new chairman, Louis Stokes (D., Ohio).

House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill Jr. (D., Mass.) and several other House leaders now believe that the committee's investigations should be continued after the current authorization runs out Thursday.

The committee's report said that, if its life is extended, it will pursue these "leads" in the inquiry in President Kennedy's assassination:

- A witness, never before interviewed, says that he was personally introduced by Jack Ruby to accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald in November 1963. The Warren Commission, which investigated the Kennedy murder of Nov. 22, 1963, concluded that Ruby never knew Oswald before the assassination. Oswald was later killed by Ruby.
- An FBI informant told the committee that he had seen an FBI agent and Oswald meeting on numerous occasions in various New Orleans bars. The agent denied the charge. The Warren Commission had received information that Oswald was an FBI undercover informant from 1962 until the time of the assassination, but did not investigate the matter after receiving a denial from then FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.
- Uncorroborated information that could establish links between Oswald and the CIA has come to the committee. According to the information, Oswald may have been associated with CIA-supported anti-Castro groups. These associations could have been masked, the committee suggests, by Oswald's reported pro-Castro activities.
- Alleged crime figure Santo Trafficante was quoted by a Cuban exile as having said several months before the assassination that Kennedy would be "hit." Ruby visited Trafficante in a Cuban jail in 1959. Trafficante appeared before the committee this month and invoked his constitutional prvileges to remain silent.

In the investigation of Dr. King's murder on April 4, 1968, the committee reported that a "now-deceased undercover informant of a southern police department" said before Dr. King's death that he had overheard members of two organizations say they would be forced to kill Dr. King if he returned to Memphis.

"The committee is intensively investigating this and other conspiracy-related leads," including information that James Earl Ray, who was convicted of Dr. King's murder, was helped by others before and after the assassination.